



VMUN 2024

# Disarmament and International Security Committee

BACKGROUND GUIDE



# VANCOUVER MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Twenty-Third Annual Session | January 26–28, 2024

Darren Tsai  
Secretary-General



Leia Tsao  
Director-General

Hugo Lam  
Chief of Staff

Pradyun Chebolu  
Director of Logistics



Emmy Wang  
USG General Assemblies

Angelina Yeung  
USG Specialized Agencies

Daniel Cao  
USG Committees

Daniel Zhang  
USG Operations

Geoffrey Yee  
USG Conference

George Sun  
USG Finance



Jenna Jaffer  
USG Delegate Affairs

Derek Li  
USG Delegate Affairs

Krisalyn Yeung  
USG Design & Media

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jessica Wu and I am ecstatic to be serving as your Director for the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). As a Grade 12 student at Collingwood School, this will be my fifth and final year of Model United Nations. Along with your Chair, Devin Yue, and Assistant Directors, Jayna Sood and Joy Lin, I welcome you to Vancouver Model United Nations 2024.

Ever since I first joined my school's Model UN club in Grade 8, I have grown to appreciate the intricate details of diplomacy and public speaking, as well as the opportunities to engage in discussions related to international affairs. Every committee session has only taught me the importance of compromise and collaboration, while embracing the richness of global diversity and perspectives. The skills that I have acquired throughout my MUN experience have been invaluable in both my personal and academic journey. At this upcoming iteration of VMUN, I encourage each of you to think critically and embrace the spirit of constructive debate.

This year, the Disarmament and International Security Committee will be discussing *Weapons of Mass Destruction* as well as *Maritime Security in the South China Sea*. To gain the most out of your experience at this conference, I urge you all to utilize the background guide, as well as external resources, to the best of your ability in order to make this conference a memorable and transformative experience.

I wish you all the best in your preparation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [disecc@vmun.com](mailto:disecc@vmun.com). On behalf of the dais team, I am looking forward to meeting you all for a weekend of fruitful debate!

Sincerely,

Jessica Wu  
DISEC Director

# Position Paper Policy

## What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the Disarmament and International Security Committee, position papers, although strongly recommended, are not required. However, delegates who wish to be considered for an award must submit position papers.

## Formatting

Position papers should:

- Include the name of the delegate, their country, and the committee
- Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins
- Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
- Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

## Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by **11:59 PM PT on January 22, 2024**. Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email to your committee's email address, with the subject heading as "[last name] [first name] — Position Paper". Please do not add any other attachments to the email.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Researched award.

The email address for this committee is *disec@vmun.com*.

<b>Weapons of Mass Destruction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Overview .....	3
Timeline .....	3
Historical Analysis .....	5
WMDs in the 20th Century .....	5
Historical Nonproliferation Efforts .....	5
Past UN/International Involvement .....	6
UNSC Involvement.....	6
UNODA Involvement .....	7
OSCE and ASEAN Involvement .....	8
Current Situation .....	8
The Deterioration of Existing Frameworks .....	8
WMD Accessibility .....	9
Flaws in Current Policies.....	10
Case Study: Russia’s Nuclear Arsenal.....	10
Case Study: Iraq’s Involvement with WMDs .....	11
Possible Solutions and Controversies .....	12
Combating Illicit Trafficking of Nuclear Materials.....	12
Preventing Nuclear Miscalculation.....	13
Strengthening Existing Agreements .....	13
Implementing a No First Use Policy.....	13
The Elimination of WMDs .....	14
Bloc Positions .....	14
United States and its Allies.....	14
Pro-WMD Nuclear Weapon States .....	15
India, Pakistan, and Israel .....	15
Developing Countries with No Official Alignment.....	15
African Union .....	16
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).....	17
Discussion Questions .....	18
Additional Resources .....	18

Bibliography .....	19
<b>Maritime Security in the South China Sea.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Overview .....	23
Timeline .....	23
Historical Analysis.....	25
Past UN/International Involvement .....	27
ASEAN Involvement .....	27
PCA Involvement .....	28
UNSC Involvement.....	28
Current Situation .....	29
Overlapping Territorial Claims.....	29
Resource Exploitation .....	30
The Interests of Non-Claimant States .....	30
Case Study: The Philippines.....	31
Case Study: The United States .....	31
Possible Solutions and Controversies .....	32
Diplomatic Negotiations Regarding Territorial Claims .....	32
Forming Conflict Resolution Mechanisms.....	32
The Enhancement of Economic Cooperation.....	33
Environmental Protection Policies .....	33
Bloc Positions .....	34
Southeast Asian Coastal States .....	34
China and its Allies .....	34
Extra-Regional States Concerned with Freedom of Navigation .....	35
Middle Eastern Countries Concerned with Regional Stability .....	35
Discussion Questions .....	36
Additional Resources .....	36
Bibliography .....	37

# Weapons of Mass Destruction

## Overview

Since its initial conception in the mid-20th century, weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have been placed in its unique category of lethality by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. They are capable of causing widespread devastation and loss of life on an unparalleled scale. Such weapons threaten to destabilize the international community, posing a significant risk to the liberal world order and humanity at large. In order to address the pressing security challenge of WMDs, non-proliferation efforts must be established at both the regional and international level.

According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, WMDs constitute weapons that are capable of delivering “nuclear explosive devices, chemical, biological or toxin agents ... for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.”<sup>1</sup> WMDs have a history of global devastation which has tremendously influenced public opinions and legislation. As a result, several multilateral treaties have been created and reinforced in order to deter the threats posed by WMDs.

Despite global efforts to prevent the spread of these weapons, various factors have contributed to its ongoing proliferation. Aggressive states, motivated by their desire to strengthen national security and deterrence strategies, have chosen to seek WMDs as a means of safeguarding their personal interests, rather than prioritizing the collective safety of the international community. Furthermore, advancements in technology and knowledge have made it significantly easier for aggressive states and non-state actors to acquire the materials necessary to develop WMD capabilities—a process which has extended the “overall risks to new parts of the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Moving forward, nuclear nation states should consider methods to reinforce the condemnation of the proliferation of WMDs through various means due to their potential to cause catastrophic loss of life. Additionally, to combat the proliferation of WMDs, nations must also account for the challenges and dynamics associated with WMD proliferation under unique geopolitical contexts.

## Timeline

**June 17, 1925** — The Geneva Protocol, a treaty prohibiting the use of biological and chemical agents in warfare, is signed following World War I. The protocol is then ratified at the start of World War II, paving the way for subsequent efforts to eliminate both types of weapons.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific*, n.d., <https://www.unrcpd.org/wmd/>.

<sup>2</sup> “Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, February 27, 2023., [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_50325.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50325.htm).

<sup>3</sup> “Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol),” *United States Department of State*, n.d., <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/4784.htm>.

**July 16, 1945** — The United States conducts the first successful test of an atomic bomb which becomes a significant milestone in the development of nuclear weapons.<sup>4</sup>

**August 1945** — The United States drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These detonations, causing hundreds of thousands of fatalities, remain the only times nuclear weapons have ever been used in an armed conflict.<sup>5</sup>

**March 5, 1970** — The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a multilateral treaty with the purpose of establishing a framework to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, is ratified.<sup>6</sup> It aims to prevent nuclear weapon states from transferring nuclear devices to other countries and prohibits them from assisting or encouraging non-nuclear weapon states from acquiring them.

**April 10, 1972** — The Biological Weapons Convention is opened for signature in the United Nations' disarmament forum in order to establish a mandate against the development of biological weapons. It serves as the first multilateral treaty to completely ban the development and stockpile of biological agents and toxins.<sup>7</sup>

**July 31, 1991** — The United States and the Soviet Union sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in the aftermath of the Cold War. This treaty aims to prevent nuclear escalation by reducing the number of deployed nuclear warheads and enhancing bilateral cooperation between the two nuclear powers.<sup>8</sup>

**September 24, 1996** — The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is adopted, banning all nuclear explosions, including those for peaceful purposes.<sup>9</sup>

**April 29, 1997** — The Chemical Weapons Convention is entered into force and seeks to encourage state parties to destroy any existing chemical weapon stockpiles along with any facilities that produce them.<sup>10</sup>

**February 5, 2011** — The New START treaty is entered into force in an attempt to renew the previously expired START Treaty. It aims to limit and reduce the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons in both countries by providing multiple on-site strategic system inspections per year.<sup>11</sup>

**January 16, 2016** — Iran and the permanent members of the United Nations' Security Council along with Germany (P5+1) reach an agreement for the the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This agreement places significant limitations on Iran's nuclear program in order to ensure that it remains exclusively peaceful.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> "Trinity: The First Nuclear Bomb Test," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, n.d., <https://thebulletin.org/virtual-tour/trinity-the-first-nuclear-bomb-test/>.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Tibbets and Curtis LeMay, "Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – 1945," *Atomic Heritage Foundation*, June 5, 2014, <https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/history/bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-1945/>.

<sup>6</sup> "Timeline of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)," *Arms Control Association*, n.d., <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NPT-Timeline>.

<sup>7</sup> "Biological Weapons Convention," *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*, n.d., <https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons/>.

<sup>8</sup> "START I at a Glance," *Arms Control Association*, n.d., <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/start1>

<sup>9</sup> "The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty," *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*, n.d., <https://www.ctbto.org/our-mission/the-treaty>.

<sup>10</sup> "Chemical Weapons Convention," *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*, n.d., <https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention>.

<sup>11</sup> "New START Treaty," *United States Department of State*, n.d., <https://www.state.gov/new-start/>.

<sup>12</sup> Kali Robinson, "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?," *Council on Foreign Relations*, n.d., <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-iran-nuclear-deal>.

**November 10, 2022** — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expresses concern regarding Iran's nuclear program as a result of rising uranium levels and actions preventing the agency from accessing nuclear sites.<sup>13</sup>

## Historical Analysis

### WMDs in the 20th Century

The concept of WMDs began with biological and chemical weapons in World War I. The brutal reality of these weapons in international warfare caused immense suffering and harm, claiming a total of more than 8 million lives.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, gases such as mustard gas, bromine, and phosgene, proved to be devastating as prolonged exposure often proved to be fatal.<sup>15</sup> Despite the initial success of the Geneva Protocol, an international agreement that prohibited the use of chemical and biological methods of warfare for future military conflicts, the treaty lacked significant long-term enforcement mechanisms, and thus, allowed for the continued pursuit of WMD capacities.<sup>16</sup>

The development and deployment of nuclear bombs during World War II ushered humanity into a new era—one where immense destructive power could be harnessed by individuals. Japan's experience with atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki demonstrated that immense devastation would follow the continued usage of nuclear weapons for the purpose of achieving geopolitical goals. The introduction to these weapons resulted in years-long animosity and mutual suspicion among countries post-war, ultimately manifesting into the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup>

### Historical Nonproliferation Efforts

The proliferation of nuclear weapons greatly intensified throughout the mid-20th century, driven by both the United States and the Soviet Union's desire to establish a system of "mutually assured security."<sup>18</sup> However, their belief that possessing a sufficient number of nuclear weapons would deter the other side from launching an attack only created nuclear near-misses, as evident in the Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962.

In the midst of the Cold War, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 played a significant role by prohibiting non-nuclear weapon states from acquiring a nuclear arsenal. The treaty has been one of the largest accomplishments in establishing trust between nations through international cooperation for arms control efforts. Nevertheless, there was a noticeable disparity that created a divide between two classes; nuclear weapon

---

<sup>13</sup> "Iran Nuclear Program 'Uncertainty' Sparks Concern at IAEA," *DW*, November 10, 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/iaea-voices-concern-over-uncertainty-in-irans-nuclear-program/a-63717684>.

<sup>14</sup> Gert G. Harigel, "Introduction to Chemical and Biological Weapons," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, January 18, 2001, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2001/01/18/introduction-to-chemical-and-biological-weapons-pub-630>.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Stefan Riedel, "Biological Warfare and Bioterrorism: A Historical Review," *National Library of Medicine*, October 2004, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1200679/>

<sup>17</sup> Campbell Craig and Sergey Radchenko, "Once More, With Feeling: The Americans, the Russians, and the Atomic Bomb," *JSTOR*, January 2011, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24916407?seq=3>.

<sup>18</sup> Raymond Smith, "A New Paradigm: Mutually Assured Security," *War on the Rocks*, July 20, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/07/a-new-paradigm-mutually-assured-security/>.



states were obliged only with reducing their stockpile while non-nuclear weapon states were required to forego all nuclear weapons.<sup>19</sup> Parallel to nuclear weapons, issues related to the use of biological or chemical weapons continued to present a risk to the international community. To address these concerns, the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972 and the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993 were held by the United Nations, leading to the elimination of the weaponization and production of both biological and chemical weapons.

Despite the united framework for disarmament and non-proliferation, many concerns remain. The tight balance between advancing disarmament and maintaining deterrence, as well as major actors' conflicting national interests, continue to impede WMD settlement. Since the 1970s, the Middle East has become a particular region of interest as a result of the "post-September 11 environment" and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.<sup>20</sup> The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, highlights the UN's attempts to address WMD proliferation in the Middle East. This agreement, which consisted of the UN Security Council's five permanent members (P5) and Germany, sets out to suppress Iran's nuclear advancement by granting sanctions relief. However, only three years after the deal was signed, former President Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA, believing that it had failed to protect national security interests.<sup>21</sup> This created uncertainty that continues to cloud any predictions regarding Iran's future nuclear actions, maintaining the Middle East as a focal point for discussions on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has remained a key concern to non-nuclear countries which often bear the risks and consequences associated with such proliferation. These countries have shown strong historical interest in non-proliferation efforts, as evident in the large number of non-nuclear signatories in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) of 1996, which banned all nuclear weapons testing for both military and civilian purposes. Moreover, specific geographical regions have also developed their own treaties regarding nuclear weapons. For instance, in 1995, member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) as a sign of the region's commitment to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in order to ensure regional peace and stability.<sup>22</sup>

## Past UN/International Involvement

### UNSC Involvement

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), one of the six organs of the United Nations, is composed of five permanent member states, along with five non-permanent members that are elected yearly. This council is devoted to maintaining international peace and security through the acknowledgement and discussion of intercontinental disputes.

---

<sup>19</sup> Richard K. Betts, "Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Columbia International Affairs Online*, January 2002, <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/casestudy/ber01/>.

<sup>20</sup> Ian O. Lesser, "Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East: Proliferation Dynamics and Strategic Consequences," *JSTOR*, 2004, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1640af.14>.

<sup>21</sup> Katherine Malus, "From 'Atoms for Peace' to 'JCPOA': History of Iranian Nuclear Development," *Columbia K=1 Project*, September 9, 2018, <https://k1project.columbia.edu/content/atoms-peace-jcboa-history-iranian-nuclear-development>.

<sup>22</sup> "Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)," *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, n.d., <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-political-security-community/peaceful-secure-and-stable-region/southeast-asia-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-seanwzf/>.

The UNSC has adopted multiple binding resolutions concerning WMD proliferation on a global scale. For instance, Resolution 1540, passed in 2004, emphasized the importance of collective, international efforts when addressing WMD non-proliferation and prevented non-state actors from obtaining materials and information concerning these weapons. It resulted in the creation of a committee, formed by countries including Ecuador, Malta, Albania, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States, to oversee its implementation, demonstrating the UN Security Council's commitment to disarmament efforts. Resolution 1540 was initially a success as it filled a major gap in international nonproliferation efforts, but with recent threats emerging, such as WMD terrorism and constant strategic fluxes in international collaboration, many countries have demonstrated concerns with the fact that it has failed to address non-traditional threats.<sup>23</sup> The UNSC's efforts have also extended beyond resolutions by creating special commissions and inspection teams to verify compliance with disarmament obligations. Notably, the UNSC mandated the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which would go on to address nuclear proliferation concerns in Iraq.<sup>24</sup> Not only has the IAEA proven to be successful in terms of identifying threats to nonproliferation efforts in Iraq, but also in Iran, where its suspicions regarding uranium enrichment prevented any potential prospects of conflict escalation.<sup>25</sup>

## UNODA Involvement

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), established in 1998, is a United Nations body which focuses on issues pertaining to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The body has had a strong devotion to preventing weapons of mass destruction from proliferation by promoting dialogue between member states and facilitating negotiations during discussions related to multilateral agreements.<sup>26</sup>

For example, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was opened for signature in 1968, the UNODA actively supported the treaty by voluntarily monitoring states' activities related to nuclear disarmament. Since then, the NPT has been successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, with the majority of countries committing to non-proliferation and disarmament. However, with recent geopolitical tensions in Europe relating to the Russo-Ukrainian War, there have been challenges reaching agreements; at the 2022 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, Russia blocked the committee from reaching an unanimous consensus over disarmament objectives by demanding several changes to be made regarding the joint draft document.<sup>27</sup> With tensions growing between member states, greater procedural measures and verification measures are needed to uphold the NPT as a foundational pillar for nuclear nonproliferation.

---

<sup>23</sup> Huma Rehman and Afsah Qazi, "Significance of UNSCR 1540 and Emerging Challenges to its Effectiveness," *JSTOR*, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544299>.

<sup>24</sup> "United Nations Special Commission," *United Nations*, n.d., <https://www.un.org/depts/unscom/unscom.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Adler, "Iran and the IAEA," *United States Institute of Peace*, October 10, 2022, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-iaea>.

<sup>26</sup> "Weapons of Mass Destruction," *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*, n.d., <https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/>

<sup>27</sup> Gabriela Rosa Hernández and Daryl G. Kimball, "Russia Blocks NPT Conference Consensus Over Ukraine," *Arms Control Association*, September 2022, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-09/news/russia-blocks-npt-conference-consensus-over-ukraine>.

## OSCE and ASEAN Involvement

Various international organizations have also collaborated to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction within their respective regions. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has demonstrated its commitment through upholding Resolution 1540; the organization, consisting of 57 states from Europe, Central Asia, and North America, provides training and cooperates with various other intercontinental organizations to strengthen nonproliferation efforts. The organization assists in producing national action plans and leads awareness-raising activities.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, ASEAN has been involved in addressing the issue of WMDs within their region. Not only did member states of the organization sign the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) to establish the Southeast Asian region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, but the organization has also publicly expressed their support for international agreements such as the NPT and the CTBT.<sup>29</sup>

## Current Situation

### The Deterioration of Existing Frameworks

The development of new national security strategies, political relations, and technology has raised concern in the international community as it surpasses existing nuclear policies. Many potential nuclear threats from countries such as North Korea, Iran, and Russia have emerged in recent decades; all of these threats have only contributed further to the eroding foundation of existing nuclear nonproliferation frameworks.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the increasing potential for non-state actors to acquire WMD capacities has only complicated the situation related to non-proliferation efforts and international security. However, despite the explicit policy violations, there is a lack of collaboration on both a domestic and international level, along with an inconsistent approach to deterring WMD development and deployment.<sup>31</sup> In order to address the recent WMDs security concerns in the most efficient manner possible, new policies and measures must be established.

---

<sup>28</sup> “Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*, n.d., <https://www.osce.org/forum-for-security-cooperation/107436>.

<sup>29</sup> “ASEAN Backs Int’l Efforts in Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *VietnamPlus*, October 10, 2020, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/asean-backs-intl-efforts-in-nonproliferation-of-weapons-of-mass-destruction/188375.vnp>.

<sup>30</sup> Al Mauroni et al., “A Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategy for the 21st Century,” *War on the Rocks*, September 8, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/a-weapons-of-mass-destruction-strategy-for-the-21st-century/>.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

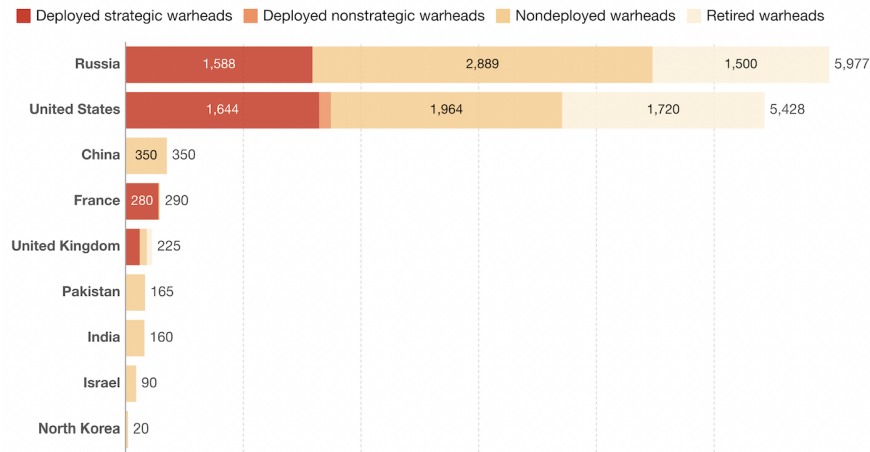


Figure 1: Estimated nuclear warhead inventories in 2022. The exact number remains a secret; estimations are based on publicly available information.<sup>32</sup>

## WMD Accessibility

New technological developments have made it easier for nations to acquire and deploy WMDs, paving the way for aspiring nuclear states and non-state actors. New WMD-relevant technological trends have the potential to produce larger-yield weapons in packages that are much more sophisticated, transportable, and compact. Yet, barriers to nuclear weapons accessibility still currently exist; examples include the inability to acquire fissile material and challenges surrounding targetability and transportation.

Such barriers, however, can easily be resolved with technological advancements, making acquiring a nuclear weapon inventory much cheaper and efficient. For instance, laser isotopic separation (LIS), a well-known method of using lasers to excite atoms selectively, is currently being explored for its ability to enrich uranium levels; allowing the LIS process to match with recent advances in laser and other technologies may result in state and non-state actors to enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels with less time, cost, and signature.<sup>33</sup>

Concerningly, drones may also be exploited to improve aspects of WMD targetability and transportation. When drones are equipped with AI-powered sensors, they can be used to precisely deliver harmful chemicals and agents. By using AI-equipped drones, these weapons become better at telling apart regular people from soldiers, undermining a major basis for the global norm against them. Much like new methods to acquire fissile material, the possibility of drones being used to deliver WMDs is a concern that would most certainly necessitate the modification of counterproliferation approaches.

<sup>32</sup> Max Roser, Bastian Herre and Joe Hasell, "Nuclear Weapons," *Our World in Data*, n.d., <https://ourworldindata.org/nuclear-weapons>.

<sup>33</sup> John P. Caves, Jr., and W. Seth Carus, "The Future of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Their Nature and Role in 2030," *Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, June 2014, [https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/97/Documents/Publications/Occasional%20Papers/10\\_Future%20of%20WMD.pdf](https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/97/Documents/Publications/Occasional%20Papers/10_Future%20of%20WMD.pdf).

## Flaws in Current Policies

With growing regional tensions and heightened miscommunication between countries, WMD nonproliferation efforts are becoming more inefficient. Moreover, differing priorities between nations is another key issue that adds to the difficulty of completely eliminating WMDs. Under current international agreements—specifically the NPT—non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) are dissatisfied with the absence of international progress and commitment towards the NPT’s goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. The lack of action has led many NNWS to believe that the NPT consists of empty promises that are unable to provide a “concrete follow-through.”<sup>34</sup> In order for multilateral treaties to be reinforced, additional insight into accountability, risk reduction strategies, and feasibility of eliminating all nuclear weapons must be provided.

## Case Study: Russia’s Nuclear Arsenal

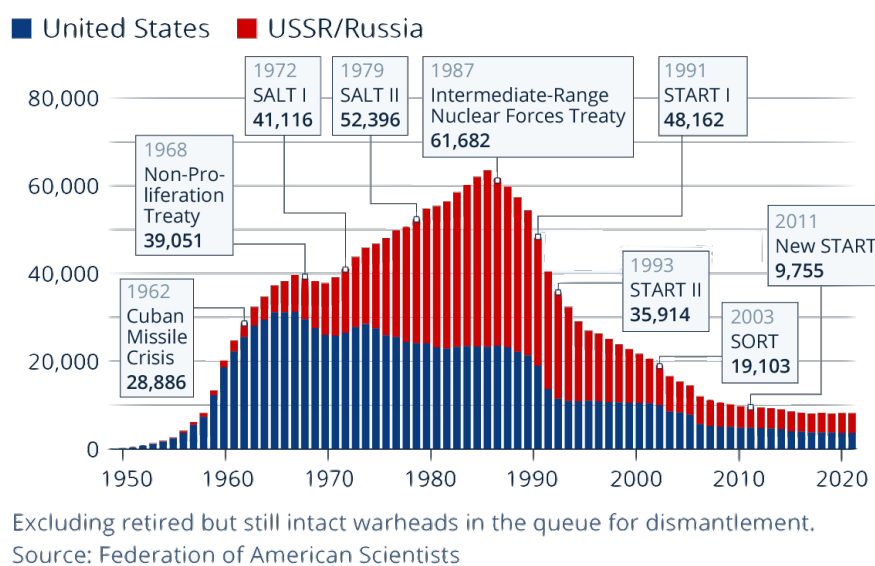


Figure 2: A comparison of the estimated nuclear warhead stockpiles between the United States and the USSR/Russia from 1950 until 2020.<sup>35</sup>

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was faced with the challenging process of adjusting the size and role of its nuclear arsenal to the requirements of the post-Cold War security environment. After reaching the peak of its nuclear inventory count in the 1980s, the Soviet Union was placed under post-Cold War treaties that limited the development and deployment of nuclear arms. Two key arms control issues that defined US-Russian relations in the 1990s were reduced strategic offensive capabilities and constraints on missile defense development. In order to address their concerns, Russia and the United States developed two strategic weapons reduction treaties: START and START II. Other arms control and disarmament treaties dealt with the elimination of intermediate-range missiles, conventional force reductions, chemical and biological weapons, and

<sup>34</sup> Jamie Kwong, “Rescuing a Fraying Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, January 13, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/01/13/rescuing-fraying-nuclear-nonproliferation-regime-pub-86189>.

<sup>35</sup> Martin Armstrong, “How U.S. and Russian Nuclear Arsenals Have Evolved,” *Statista*, February 22, 2023, <https://www.statista.com/chart/16305/stockpiled-nuclear-warhead-count/>.

a moratorium on nuclear tests; for example, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty stifled missile defense development greatly by limiting both the United States and Russia to two ABM deployment areas each.<sup>36</sup>

With the emergence of the Russo-Ukrainian War, the possibility of Russia utilizing their nuclear arsenal—as President Vladimir Putin has previously threatened—remains unclear. Moreover, concerns regarding Russia’s use of nuclear weapons escalated further after it was confirmed that tactical nuclear weapons have been stationed in Belarus, marking the second time in history where Russia has based their nuclear weapons outside of its own territory.<sup>37</sup>

The lack of international action in response to Russia’s decision to move their nuclear arsenal to Belarus is largely due to the fact that the country’s actions had not violated international nonproliferation promises.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, six different facilities in Europe are in possession of American nuclear bombs, proving that no multilateral agreement has prohibited the deployment of nuclear weapons outside of one’s territory.<sup>39</sup> However, in the context of the war, Putin’s decision can lead to unnecessary heightened risks of miscalculation.

### **Case Study: Iraq’s Involvement with WMDs**

Iraq’s pursuit of WMDs has long been an issue of concern for the international community. Although Iraq had initially been against the military use of chemical weapons through their support of the Geneva Convention in 1929, it was revealed by UN investigation trips that Iraq had increased their production and deployment of chemical weapons drastically near the end of the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>40</sup> Although Iraq argued that their development of chemical weapons was in response to Iran’s use of chemical weapons in the Battle of Khorramshahr, UN investigative reports discovered that all Iranian uses of gas on the battlefield had occurred years after the Khorramshahr battle.<sup>41</sup>

After the Gulf War in the 1990s, the United Nations identified and destroyed substantial quantities of Iraqi chemical weapons and related equipment and materials. Additionally, Iraq agreed to terminate its chemical, biological, and nuclear programmes. However, in the 1990s and early 2000s, the Bush administration in the United States developed concerns over Iraq’s nuclear weapons program, and they launched an investigation through the IAEA to determine the existence of such a program.<sup>42</sup> In the following few years, the IAEA would perform inspections to ensure that Iraq was in conformity with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other related agreements. Although the inspections were originally hampered by Iraq’s refusal to cooperate and

---

<sup>36</sup> Pavel Podvig, “The Russian Nuclear Arsenal,” *Columbia International Affairs Online*, November 2005, <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/casestudy/case003/case003.html>.

<sup>37</sup> David Ljunggren, “Putin says Moscow to place nuclear weapons in Belarus, US reacts cautiously,” *Reuters*, March 26, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-says-moscow-has-deal-with-belarus-station-nuclear-weapons-there-tass-2023-03-25/>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Masters and Will Merrow, “Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Mapping U.S. and Russian Deployments,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 30, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/nuclear-weapons-europe-mapping-us-and-russian-deployments>.

<sup>40</sup> “The Geneva Convention and the Iraq War - 2003-04-11,” *Voice of America English News*, October 29, 2009, <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2003-04-11-54-1-67458912/279984.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Michael Brill, “We Attacked them with Chemical Weapons and They Attacked Us with Chemical Weapons”: Iraqi Records and the History of Iran’s Chemical Weapons Program,” *Wilson Center*, March 31, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/part-ii-we-attacked-them-chemical-weapons-and-they-attacked-us-chemical-weapons-iraqi>.

<sup>42</sup> Mohamed ElBaradei, “The Status of Nuclear Inspections in Iraq,” *International Atomic Energy Agency*, January 27, 2023, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/status-nuclear-inspections-iraq>.

attempts to conceal its activities, the IAEA inspections revealed no evidence of ongoing nuclear weapons development in Iraq.<sup>43</sup>

In 2010, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon praised Iraq for remaining WMD-free and its commitment to upholding several multilateral treaties, including the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, in 2004, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1546, which authorized the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) to aid Iraq's transition to a sovereign and stable state. These efforts included reforming the electoral process, facilitating regional dialogue with Iraq's neighbours, and upholding fundamental human rights.<sup>45</sup>

Following the harsh experience of the Iraqi people as a result of the former regime's policies, Iraq has declared that it will be free of WMDs and their delivery systems and has reaffirmed its commitment to the conventions and treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation.<sup>46</sup>

## Possible Solutions and Controversies

### Combating Illicit Trafficking of Nuclear Materials

The possibility of aggressive state actors or non-state actors acquiring nuclear materials has become a global concern. As of December 31, 2006, there were a total of 1,080 instances of illegal trafficking and other unauthorized actions involving nuclear and other radioactive material.<sup>47</sup> Approximately 54% of cases reported by states contain evidence of theft, illegal possession, and efforts to sell or smuggle nuclear or radioactive materials across borders.<sup>48</sup> Thus, new security measures may be implemented through proper detection equipment and mandatory training for individuals responsible for overseeing nuclear materials. Additionally, record examinations of facilities and periodic inspections on nuclear materials may further enhance security. Moreover, member states in possession of nuclear materials may also choose to utilize available resources from international organizations, including the IAEA, WCO, Europol and Interpol, with the purpose of guaranteeing that criminal or unauthorized acts involving nuclear material theft are reported and investigated efficiently. Countries may also choose to enhance bilateral regional cooperation or international cooperation through various communication measures to ensure that all transportation related to radioactive material can be identified and inspected by neighboring countries. Although these tactics can play a key part in achieving nonproliferation goals, many countries may be reluctant to share information with other states, especially in regions that are engaged in conflict. Sharing information regarding nuclear materials and weapons may

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> "Iraq: Security Council Ends War-related Mandates in 'Milestone' Session," *United Nations*, December 15, 2010, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/12/362212>.

<sup>45</sup> "United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)," *United Nations*, n.d., <https://iraq.un.org/en/132447-united-nations-assistance-mission-iraq-unami>.

<sup>46</sup> Mohammed Al-Humaimidi, "Republic of Iraq," *United Nations*, May 5, 2010, [https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/statements/pdf/iraq\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/statements/pdf/iraq_en.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> "Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material," *IAEA Nuclear Security Series*, December 2007, [https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/pub1309\\_web.pdf](https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/pub1309_web.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

undermine each country's national security; knowledge of this information may be abused in order to gain military advantages in warfare.

### **Preventing Nuclear Miscalculation**

Historically, communication hotlines (a quick method of communication between governments), such as the U.S.-China Nuclear Hotline and the U.S.-Russia Nuclear Hotline, have played a vital role in crisis management, avoiding miscalculation, and crisis stabilization.<sup>49</sup> Although nuclear hotlines play a critical role in preventing conflict escalation from erupting into nuclear warfare, the system is also vulnerable in times of war. Specifically, communication systems are difficult to maintain during crises and are especially vulnerable during times of war.<sup>50</sup> As strong communication networks play a vital role in preventing conflict, delegates should work towards a resolution that aims to implement or recommend methods to strengthen current nuclear hotlines. Providing better communication networking will result in a reduced risk of escalation during times of military conflict. However, some contentious points of discussion include security risks from unauthorized access and conflicted national security interests.

### **Strengthening Existing Agreements**

Current policies related to WMDs have played a pivotal role in maintaining stability. However, a lack of international collaboration, as seen at the 2022 NPT Review Conference, proves that WMD-related cooperation must be improved. Members of these agreements can reduce the danger of WMD proliferation by ensuring governments are upholding their commitments and duties through strengthened monitoring, verification, and enforcement measures. This is in part due to the fact that increased compliance standards encourage accountability and openness, therefore strengthening state-to-state relations. However, this proposal may lead to further escalation in tensions between countries who are already engaged in regional conflict. Thus, it is important to consider which aspects of current international frameworks—such as the NPT, the CTBT, and the PTBT—should be updated or reviewed.

### **Implementing a No First Use Policy**

Although the purpose of nuclear weapons is to prevent attacks by other nations, a country led by an irrational actor could easily start a nuclear conflict in response to a conventional attack by an adversary.<sup>51</sup> A “no-first-use” (NFU) regulation would eliminate this option by binding member states to an agreement where nuclear weapons would not be used first and instead, would only be used to respond to a nuclear attack. A multilateral NFU agreement would greatly decrease the chances of nuclear escalation and foster international cooperation by coordinating efforts towards preventing both nonproliferation and the use of nuclear weapons.

However, before introducing an international NFU policy, an important point must be taken into consideration. An NFU policy would significantly undermine deterrence; a country's adversary may take advantage of the NFU

---

<sup>49</sup> “Hotline Agreements,” *Arms Control Association*, n.d., <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Hotlines>.

<sup>50</sup> Steven E. Miller, “Nuclear Hotlines: Origins, Evolution, Applications,” *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, n.d., <https://stanleycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/AINW-Hotlines-SMiller1020.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> “Nuclear Weapons Solutions,” *Union of Concerned Scientists*, n.d., <https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/solutions>.



policy and strike conventionally without the fear of nuclear retaliation. This is particularly concerning due to the exponential growth of conventional capacities from countries such as China and Russia.<sup>52</sup> If the United States were to sign an NFU policy, allied countries would be greatly affected by the United States' missing "nuclear umbrella" (a term used to describe when a nuclear-weapons state defends a non-nuclear weapon state with its nuclear inventory). A lack of trust in the United States' military support would only foster greater regional tensions amongst its allies and heighten the chances of conventional escalation and conflict.

Furthermore, the creation of an NFU policy does not guarantee signatures from all nuclear-weapon states. Nuclear weapon regimes frequently use the uncertainty surrounding nuclear weapons' first deployment as a crucial element of their military strategy. By keeping the possibility of first use open, they may effectively discourage potential adversaries by upholding a policy of purposeful ambiguity. A degree of uncertainty around their course of action in a conflict is meant to deter aggressiveness and improve strategic stability.

### **The Elimination of WMDs**

For many non-nuclear-weapon states, the elimination of WMDs will be a common topic of discussion. The desire to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons is evident in the creation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), signed in 2017. Under this treaty, states are forbidden from creating, testing, producing, manufacturing, purchasing, holding, or stockpiling nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. States are also forbidden from utilizing nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, as well as threatening to do so. Finally, states party to this agreement are prohibited from allowing nuclear weapons to be deployed or stationed on their soil.<sup>53</sup> The treaty received 92 signatories and was recently ratified in many countries including the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala.<sup>54</sup> Other advocates of this ban treaty also included Algeria, Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa. Although the treaty was eventually adopted in July of 2017, all nuclear weapon states along with their military allies boycotted both rounds of resolution negotiations at the UN General Assembly. If the elimination of WMDs is to be pursued by non-nuclear-weapon states, they should expect disagreement from nuclear-weapon states and concerns regarding whether this solution is realistic or beneficial for international security. Thus, the feasibility of such proposals is low, and alternate solutions may need to be considered before introducing the potential elimination of WMDs.

## **Bloc Positions**

### **United States and its Allies**

The United States, along with many of its allies, strongly supports nuclear nonproliferation and have previously committed to multilateral agreements, such as the NPT and the CTBT. Countries in this bloc consist of North Atlantic Treaty Organization members, along with select non-NATO countries, such as Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Although these countries are strongly in support of disarmament, there are mixed sentiments

---

<sup>52</sup> Robert Einhorn, "No First Use of Nuclear Weapons is Still a Bridge Too Far, but Biden can Make Progress Toward That Goal," *Brookings Institution*, October 2021, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP\\_20211020nfu\\_einhorn.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP_20211020nfu_einhorn.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)," *Nuclear Threat Initiative*, n.d., <https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons/>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

regarding the complete elimination of nuclear weapons; while many NATO members support the United States' "nuclear umbrella" due to its significance in their national security, Canada is the only NATO member that has taken a strong stance in supporting the elimination nuclear weapons.<sup>55</sup> This bloc would most likely encourage the strengthening of existing frameworks and take further measures to prevent nuclear miscalculation.

### **Pro-WMD Nuclear Weapon States**

Russia, China, and North Korea are nuclear-weapon states that share a history of being targeted by Western powers and perceive WMDs as a means to deter potential aggressors and ensure their national security. They view possessing strong WMD capabilities as a way to maintain their sovereignty and prevent foreign interventions and therefore, would be strongly against the complete elimination of WMDs. Bolstered by their historical experiences of external interventions and current military involvement, these countries would most likely aim to use their WMD capabilities to assert their influence to reaffirm their roles on the global stage.

Of the nuclear-weapon states, China is the only nuclear-armed nation in the world to have an unwavering No First Use (NFU) policy regarding the use of nuclear weapons, whether as a preemptive strike, first strike, or in response to any sort of non-nuclear attack.<sup>56</sup> China also has a mutual agreement with its ally, Russia, to have an NFU policy under the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation. All other countries, however, have not taken a firm stand on adopting an NFU policy out of fear that doing so would result in more conventional attacks.

### **India, Pakistan, and Israel**

These countries exist outside the framework of the NPT, which has led to international concerns about the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. India, Pakistan, and Israel have maintained a policy of strategic ambiguity regarding their nuclear capabilities. This ambiguity serves to deter potential adversaries while avoiding direct confrontation with the international community's non-proliferation norms. With differing degrees of commitment to nuclear disarmament, they will most likely support efforts to prevent the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and enhancement of communication hotlines while preserving their own security interests.

### **Developing Countries with No Official Alignment**

Developing countries with no particular alliance to any global nuclear powers include Ecuador, Cuba, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Argentina, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. Many of these countries have made commitments to nonproliferation treaties and have led previous initiatives and discussions regarding nuclear disarmament. For example, Ecuador previously chaired the 1540 Committee in an attempt to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Similarly, Cuba collaborated with the European Union to hold dialogues against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Their primary goals are to promote disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. They will continue to support

---

<sup>55</sup> "Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in NATO," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, n.d., [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_48895.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48895.htm).

<sup>56</sup> "No First Use FAQs," *Global Zero*, n.d., <https://www.globalzero.org/no-first-use-faqs/>.



### **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprising ten member states—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia—has consistently demonstrated a unified stance on the issue of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Rooted in the principles of non-interference and regional stability, ASEAN member states advocate for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia. The Treaty of Bangkok, signed in 1995, exemplifies this commitment, as it formalized the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) arrangement. Additionally, the ASEAN Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Protocol, adopted in 2010, further underscores the region's resolve to promote disarmament and uphold nuclear non-proliferation norms. ASEAN member states, in line with these treaties, emphasize the importance of international cooperation and dialogue in striving to create a region where the specter of WMDs is replaced by the pursuit of common security.

## Discussion Questions

1. How do weapons of mass destruction impact global security dynamics and regional stability?
2. To what extent does the possession of weapons of mass destruction serve as a deterrent against geopolitical aggression and conflict?
3. How can the international community balance effective non-proliferation measures with each country's security interests?
4. How can efforts to address the issue of weapons of mass destruction be balanced with respect for national sovereignty and the rights of states to self-defense?
5. How realistic are the solutions proposed? Have similar solutions been proposed in the past and if so, what can we learn from them?
6. What issues take precedence over others? Do a country's national interests come before international security?

## Additional Resources

Weapons of Mass Destruction:

[https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/wmd\\_epub\\_final.pdf](https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/wmd_epub_final.pdf)

Nuclear Risk Reduction: How Could the EU Contribute?:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24639>

International Law and Weapons of Mass Destruction: End of the Arms Control Approach?:

<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1417&context=facpub>

States Invest in Nuclear Arsenals as Geopolitical Relations Deteriorate:

<https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2023/states-invest-nuclear-arsenals-geopolitical-relations-deteriorate-new-sipri-yearbook-out-now>

## Bibliography

- Adler, Michael. "Iran and the IAEA." *United States Institute of Peace*. <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-iaea>.
- Al-Humaimidi, Mohammed. "Republic of Iraq." *United Nations*. [https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/statements/pdf/iraq\\_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/statements/pdf/iraq_en.pdf).
- "Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in NATO," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_48895.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48895.htm).
- Armstrong, Martin. "How U.S. and Russian Nuclear Arsenals Have Evolved." *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/chart/16305/stockpiled-nuclear-warhead-count/>.
- "ASEAN Backs Int'l Efforts in Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction." *VietnamPlus*. <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/asean-backs-intl-efforts-in-nonproliferation-of-weapons-of-mass-destruction/188375.vnp>.
- Betts, Richard K. "Weapons of Mass Destruction." *Columbia International Affairs Online*. <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/casestudy/ber01/>.
- "Biological Weapons Convention." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*. <https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons/>.
- Brill, Michael. "We Attacked them with Chemical Weapons and They Attacked Us with Chemical Weapons': Iraqi Records and the History of Iran's Chemical Weapons Program." *Wilson Center*. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/part-ii-we-attacked-them-chemical-weapons-and-they-attacked-us-chemical-weapons-iraqi>
- Caves, John P., Jr., and W. Seth Carus. "The Future of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Their Nature and Role in 2030." *Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction*. [https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/97/Documents/Publications/Occasional%20Papers/10\\_Future%20of%20WMD.pdf](https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/97/Documents/Publications/Occasional%20Papers/10_Future%20of%20WMD.pdf).
- "Chemical Weapons Convention." *Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*. <https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention>.
- "Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material." *IAEA Nuclear Security Series*. [https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/pub1309\\_web.pdf](https://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/pub1309_web.pdf).
- "The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty." *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*. <https://www.ctbto.org/our-mission/the-treaty>.
- Craig, Campbell, and Sergey Radchenko. "Once More, With Feeling: The Americans, the Russians, and the Atomic Bomb." *Diplomatic History* 35 (January 2011): 101-05. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24916407?seq=3>.
- Einhorn, Robert. "No First Use of Nuclear Weapons is Still a Bridge Too Far, but Biden can Make Progress Toward That Goal." *Brookings Institution*. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP\\_20211020nfu\\_einhorn.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FP_20211020nfu_einhorn.pdf).

- ElBaradei, Mohamed. "The Status of Nuclear Inspections in Iraq." *International Atomic Energy Agency*.  
<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/status-nuclear-inspections-iraq>.
- "The Geneva Convention and the Iraq War - 2003-04-11." *Voice of America English News*.  
<https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2003-04-11-54-1-67458912/279984.html>.
- Harigel, Gert G. "Introduction to Chemical and Biological Weapons." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2001/01/18/introduction-to-chemical-and-biological-weapons-pub-630>.
- Hernández, Gabriela Rosa, and Daryl G. Kimball. "Russia Blocks NPT Conference Consensus Over Ukraine." *Arms Control Association*. <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-09/news/russia-blocks-npt-conference-consensus-over-ukraine>.
- Horowitz, Liviu. "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Enters into Force," *Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey*. <https://nonproliferation.org/african-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-enters-into-force/>.
- "Hotline Agreements." *Arms Control Association*. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Hotlines>.
- "Iran Nuclear Program 'Uncertainty' Sparks Concern at IAEA." *DW*. <https://www.dw.com/en/iaea-voices-concern-over-uncertainty-in-irans-nuclear-program/a-63717684>.
- "Iraq: Security Council Ends War-related Mandates in 'Milestone' Session." *United Nations*.  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/12/362212>.
- Kwong, Jamie. "Rescuing a Fraying Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/01/13/rescuing-fraying-nuclear-nonproliferation-regime-pub-86189>.
- Lesser, Ian O. "Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East: Proliferation Dynamics and Strategic Consequences." In *The Future Security Environment in the Middle East: Conflict, Stability, and Political Change*, 253-98. N.p., 2004. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1640af.14>.
- Ljunggren, David. "Putin says Moscow to place nuclear weapons in Belarus, US reacts cautiously." *Reuters*.  
<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-says-moscow-has-deal-with-belarus-station-nuclear-weapons-there-tass-2023-03-25/>.
- Malus, Katherine. "From 'Atoms for Peace' to 'JCPOA': History of Iranian Nuclear Development." *Columbia K=1 Project*. <https://k1project.columbia.edu/content/atoms-peace-jcpoa-history-iranian-nuclear-development>.
- Masters, Jonathan, and Will Merrow. "Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Mapping U.S. and Russian Deployments." *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/nuclear-weapons-europe-mapping-us-and-russian-deployments>.
- Mauroni, Al, Zachary Kallenborn, Seth Carus, and Ron Fizer. "A Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategy for the 21st Century." *War on the Rocks*. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/a-weapons-of-mass-destruction-strategy-for-the-21st-century/>.
- Miller, Steven E. "Nuclear Hotlines: Origins, Evolution, Applications." *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*. <https://stanleycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/AINW-Hotlines-SMiller1020.pdf>.

"New START Treaty." *United States Department of State*. <https://www.state.gov/new-start/>.

"No First Use FAQ." *Global Zero*. <https://www.globalzero.org/no-first-use-faqs/>.

"Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction." *Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. <https://www.osce.org/forum-for-security-cooperation/107436>.

"Nuclear Disarmament South Africa." *NTI*. <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/south-africa-nuclear-disarmament>.

"Nuclear Weapons Solutions." *Union of Concerned Scientists*. <https://www.ucsusa.org/nuclear-weapons/solutions>.

Podvig, Pavel. "The Russian Nuclear Arsenal." *Columbia International Affairs Online*. <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/casestudy/case003/case003.html>.

"Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gasses, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol)." *United States Department of State*. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/4784.htm>.

Rehman, Huma, and Afsah Qazi. "Significance of UNSCR 1540 and Emerging Challenges to its Effectiveness." *Strategic Studies* 39, no. 2 (2019): 48-66. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48544299>.

Robinson, Kali. "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?" *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal>.

Roser, Max, Bastian Herre, and Joe Hasell. "Nuclear Weapons." *Our World in Data*. <https://ourworldindata.org/nuclear-weapons>.

Smith, Raymond. "A New Paradigm: Mutually Assured Security." *War on the Rocks*. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/07/a-new-paradigm-mutually-assured-security/>.

"Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)." *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*. <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-political-security-community/peaceful-secure-and-stable-region/southeast-asia-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-seanwzf/>.

"START I at a Glance." *Arms Control Association*. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/start1>.

Tibbets, Paul, and Curtis LeMay. "Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – 1945." *Atomic Heritage Foundation*. <https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/history/bombings-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-1945/>.

"Timeline of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)." *Arms Control Association*. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NPT-Timeline>.

"Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)." *Nuclear Threat Initiative*. <https://www.nti.org/education-center/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons/>.

"Trinity: The First Nuclear Bomb Test." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. <https://thebulletin.org/virtual-tour/trinity-the-first-nuclear-bomb-test/>.

"United Nations Special Commission." *United States Institute of Peace*. <https://www.un.org/depts/unscom/unscom.htm>.



"Weapons of Mass Destruction." *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*.  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_50325.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50325.htm).

"Weapons of Mass Destruction." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*.  
<https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/>.

"Weapons of Mass Destruction." *United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific*. <https://www.unrcpd.org/wmd/>.

# Maritime Security in the South China Sea

## Overview

The South China Sea, a vital maritime region of immense strategic significance, has long been embroiled in a myriad of intricate disputes. As an “essential maritime crossroad for trade,” this region is valued for its importance in the global economy and prospects pertaining to the discovery and extraction of natural gas.<sup>59</sup> As a result of the region’s increasing importance, maritime forces are growing in order to protect involved states’ rights and interests, resulting in the potential for military confrontations and regional conflicts.

Maritime security in the South China Sea has been significantly eroded by territorial disputes that have occurred between multiple Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, China, Brunei, and Malaysia.<sup>60</sup> Many of these disputes have been exacerbated by China’s territorial claims over the region; in particular, China’s highly assertive “nine-dash line” has laid a sweeping claim over more than 80% of the South China Sea, resulting in overlap with the exclusive economic zones and territorial claims of many neighbouring countries.<sup>61</sup> Since China’s assertion over its territory in the South China Sea was made, multiple other countries have attempted to do the same; the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, China, and Malaysia have claimed sovereignty over the Spratly Islands, an archipelago with significant oil reserves nearby. Furthermore, multiple countries have claimed territory that they claim is within their exclusive economic zone.<sup>62</sup>

The complexity of maritime security concerns in the South China Sea requires a holistic approach to address the complex array of challenges at hand. Multiple international organizations have been involved in the territorial conflicts in the South China Sea, including the International Court of Justice, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations. Despite significant intervention from regional stakeholders and other major powers, conflicts continue to occur at sea, risking escalations that could undermine multilateral agreements and relationships.

In order to properly safeguard regional stability, multiple factors must be taken into consideration; historical disputes, differing territorial claims, and geopolitical relations will need to be evaluated in order to develop a multifaceted approach to this security issue.

## Timeline

**April 17, 1895** — The Sino-Japanese War ends with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The treaty does not specify who the Senkaku Islands belong to.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke, “The Critical Role of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea,” *JSTOR*, October 1, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22586.30>.

<sup>60</sup> “Why are Tensions Running High in the South China Sea Dispute?,” *South China Morning Post*, February 16, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2186449/explained-south-china-sea-dispute>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> “What is the South China Sea Dispute?,” *BBC News*, July 7, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>

<sup>63</sup> “China’s Maritime Disputes,” Council on Foreign Relations, n.d., <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/chinas-maritime-disputes>

**December 1, 1947** — China, ruled by the nationalist Kuomintang party, draws an eleven-dash line on a map to demarcate its territorial claims in the South China Sea.<sup>64</sup>

**September 8, 1951** — Japan, the United States, and 47 other states sign the Treaty of San Francisco, which surrenders the country's territorial claims from World War II. Although territory in the South China Sea is included in this treaty, it is never explicitly mentioned to whom they are returned to.<sup>65</sup>

**January 19, 1974** — One year following the conclusion of the Paris Peace Accords, Chinese troops take control of the western sector of the Paracel Islands. During this event, they raise flags on multiple islands and capture a South Vietnamese garrison.<sup>66</sup>

**December 10, 1982** — The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) creates a resolution that outlines nations' rights and obligations in their use of surrounding oceans. It does not address sovereignty concerns in the South China Sea, and its ambiguous wording has precluded it from serving as a credible body of law in settling territorial disputes.<sup>67</sup>

**March 4, 1988** — A confrontation between the Chinese navy and three Vietnam vessels on the Johnson Reef results in the deaths of 74 sailors. This is one of the most serious confrontations to this day and represents countries taking on a more assertive stance in the region.<sup>68</sup>

**November 16, 1994** — The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea comes into effect. This treaty creates a legal framework and international regulations for all uses of the oceans and their resources.<sup>69</sup>

**November 4, 2002** — China signs the non-binding Declaration on the Conduct of Parties along with other ASEAN member states. The regional agreement aims to promote the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea.<sup>70</sup>

**May 6, 2009** — Malaysia and Vietnam send a joint submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to claim an Extended Continental Shelf (the organization responsible for facilitating the implementation of UNCLOS) that extends further into the South China Sea. In response, China submits the “nine-dash line.”<sup>71</sup>

**July 23, 2010** — Hillary Clinton, then the United States' Secretary of State, restates Washington's neutrality on claims to sovereignty over islands in the South China Sea. She reiterates the United States' desire to retain “open access to Asia's maritime commons.”<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” International Maritime Organization, n.d., <https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/legal/pages/unitednationsconventiononthelawofthesea.aspx>

<sup>70</sup> “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea,” Association of Southeast Asian Nations, May 14, 2012, <https://asean.org/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2/>

<sup>71</sup> “South China Sea Disputes Arise Again,” National University of Singapore, n.d., <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/publication/south-china-sea-disputes-arise-again/>

<sup>72</sup> Mark Landler, “Offering to Aid Talks, U.S. Challenges China on Disputed Islands,” *New York Times*, July 23, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/24/world/asia/24diplo.html>

**June 21, 2012** — Vietnam passes the Law of the Sea, which claims sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands. This claim is disputed by China which argues that the Paracel and Spratly Islands are a crucial part of China's indisputable territory.<sup>73</sup>

**May 2, 2014** — Vietnamese naval ships and Chinese vessels collide in the South China Sea. This conflict causes ASEAN leaders to express serious concerns over Chinese behaviour in the region who had previously avoided a clash of economic interests with China.<sup>74</sup>

**March 14, 2016** — In an attempt to focus on territorial issues and every country's sea rights, China establishes an International Maritime Judicial Centre. This decision demonstrates China's opposition to international rule making.<sup>75</sup>

**October 19, 2018** — ASEAN navies agree to conduct their first joint exercises with China in the South China Sea. The purpose of these exercises is to "enhance friendship and confidence."<sup>76</sup>

**April 2020** — A three-way standoff in Malaysia's exclusive economic zone between China, Malaysia, and Vietnam comes to an end after Chinese vessels leave the area.<sup>77</sup>

**March 12, 2021** — The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, consisting of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, announces their commitment to upholding maritime security in the South China Sea.<sup>78</sup>

**September 9, 2023** — The Philippines alleges that Chinese vessels engaged in 'risky maneuvers' within a contested region of the South China Sea, escalating tensions in their ongoing maritime dispute.<sup>79</sup>

## Historical Analysis

China has made territorial claims in the South China Sea islands for several decades. In 1947, when the Republic of China issued a map with nine dashes, it claimed a large majority of the South China Sea as its own to assert Chinese sovereignty. The present day situation is primarily a result of the 1951 San Francisco Treaty following the end of World War II.<sup>80</sup> After Japan's imperial dominance ended in the South China Sea, the lack of clear ownership of the islands led to a power vacuum. This resulted in multiple regional groups asserting claims to

---

<sup>73</sup> Jane Perlez, "Vietnam Law on Contested Islands Draws China's Ire," *New York Times*, June 21, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/world/asia/china-criticizes-vietnam-in-dispute-over-islands.html>

<sup>74</sup> "Vietnam Says China Still Ramming Boats, Airs Sinking Video," *Bloomberg News*, June 5, 2014, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-06-05/vietnam-says-china-still-harassing-boats-shows-video-of-sinking#xj4y7vzkg>

<sup>75</sup> "China Sea Territorial Disputes to be Handled by International Maritime Judicial Center Created by Beijing," *Manila Livewire*, March 14, 2016, [https://www.manilalivewire.com/files/r-created-by-beijing\\_u0r8jzq8p0c6fhse5muga0/](https://www.manilalivewire.com/files/r-created-by-beijing_u0r8jzq8p0c6fhse5muga0/)

<sup>76</sup> Annabelle Liang, "Southeast Asian Navies to Hold 1st Joint Drills with China," *AP News*, October 19, 2018, <https://apnews.com/article/eeb3463f4a1244f9b61ac914abecedde>

<sup>77</sup> Rozanna Latiff, "Chinese Ship Leaves Malaysian Waters after Month-Long South China Sea Standoff," *Reuters*, May 15, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/china-security-malaysia-idINKBN22R1QT>

<sup>78</sup> "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: 'The Spirit of the Quad'," *The White House*, March 12, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>

<sup>79</sup> Shawn Deng and Chris Lau, "Philippines accuses Chinese vessels of 'dangerous maneuvers' in disputed South China Sea," *CNN News*, September 9, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/09/asia/philippines-south-china-sea-dangerous-maneuvers-intl-hnk/index.html>

<sup>80</sup> Yunus Erbas, "The Conflict in the South China Sea: A Focus on a Possible Solution," *Beyond the Horizon*, April 11, 2022, <https://behorizon.org/the-conflict-in-the-south-china-sea-a-focus-on-a-possible-solution/>

overlapping territories. Since the introduction of this treaty, tensions have continued to escalate in the South China Sea; parts of the Paracels and Spratly Islands chain have been claimed by multiple countries including China, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.<sup>81</sup> The strategic value of the South China Sea has been demonstrated through an extensive history of involvement from many empires for its military and economic importance. For example, in the 12th century, the South China Sea witnessed a series of naval conflicts between two powerful Southeast Asian empires, the Champa Empire and the Khmer Empire. These clashes were emblematic of a struggle for power, control of vital trade routes, and territorial dominance in the South China Sea.<sup>82</sup>

Following World War II, the United States emerged as a resident great power in East Asia. In addition to the far-flung island territories that were previously controlled by Japan in the South Pacific, the United States maintained a significant military presence in Japan and close relations with South Korea and the Philippines, both of which were former Japanese colonies. Although the United States continued to form tight-knit relations with multiple Southeast Asian countries including Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, China remained a primary concern for America's regional dominance and democratic interests. As the United States remained close allies with many of the countries in the region, its military presence also increased in the South China Sea.<sup>83</sup>

Beginning in 1988, military conflicts escalated between China and Vietnam, with subsequent incidents occurring including a 1996 clash involving Chinese and Japanese naval vessels at Mischief Reef, and a 2010 confrontation between a Chinese boat and the Japanese Coast Guard.<sup>84</sup> During the period spanning December 2013 to October 2015, China embarked on a significant project: the construction of artificial islands near the Spratly Islands.<sup>85</sup> These islands were widely interpreted as a means to bolster territorial claims by converting them into military bases, complete with defensive weaponry, mobile missile shelters, and aircraft. These events illustrate the volatility and regional tensions surrounding the South China Sea, as countries increasingly attempt to control it for its economic and strategic importance.

Additionally, the South China Sea also plays a crucial role in global economics. In 1969, according to a UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East report, "substantial energy deposits" were discovered near the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, located north of the South China Sea.<sup>86</sup> The report represented one of the first discoveries of natural gas resources in the region, reigniting interest in the area. Since then, multiple Southeast Asian countries have expressed their interest in exploring these resources. In 2012, the Philippines made a large oil discovery in the Northwest Palawan Basin. Furthermore, in 2014, Vietnam sent its navy to prevent China from building an oil rig in disputed waters near the Paracel Islands, demonstrating escalating tensions over access to resources.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Adam Bray, "The Cham: Descendants of Ancient Rulers of South China Sea Watch Maritime Dispute From Sidelines," *National Geographic*, June 18, 2014, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/140616-south-china-sea-vietnam-china-cambodia-champa>

<sup>83</sup> Marvin Ott, "The South China Sea in Strategic Terms," *Wilson Center*, May 14, 2019, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-china-sea-strategic-terms>

<sup>84</sup> "China's Maritime Disputes," *Council on Foreign Relations*

<sup>85</sup> Ivan Watson, Brad Lendon, and Ben Westcott, "The Battle for the South China Sea," *CNN*, <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/08/asia/south-china-sea/>

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

The South China Sea also plays a critical role in trade. Since the beginning of globalization, the maritime Silk Roads have connected regions of South and Southeast Asia, expanding into areas such as the South China Sea.<sup>88</sup> The South China Sea's location continues to foster major trade routes between trading centres in China, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Furthermore, countries have claimed exclusive economic zones—UN-designated regions of coastal water within a set distance of a country's coastline where countries have exclusive rights for economic activities—in the South China Sea. China, Vietnam, and the Philippines have made the most significant and influential claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea; China's claim to the Spratly Islands may have far-reaching ramifications if it plans to claim entire, exclusive economic zones surrounding those islands, which would result in territorial overlaps with exclusive economic zones claimed by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam.<sup>89</sup> Historically, there have also been other instances of overlapping territorial claims. In 2009, Vietnam and Malaysia both sought to extend their continental shelves; in response, China stated that these claims would infringe on its historical rights surrounding their own exclusive economic zone and other territorial waters.<sup>90</sup>

## Past UN/International Involvement

### ASEAN Involvement

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been involved in the South China Sea for many decades because of the region's relevance to many of its member countries. The political and economic union has contributed greatly to promoting diplomatic efforts and regional stability; in 1992, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea, which aimed to promote peace, stability, and cooperation in the region. The declaration advocated for peaceful conflict settlement, restraint by participating parties, and collaboration in areas of mutual interest. This agreement was publicly reaffirmed by the involved parties a decade later in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.<sup>91</sup>

Furthermore, to uphold confidence-building measures in the region, ASEAN created the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a multilateral security dialogue forum that includes ASEAN member states, along with other major powers in the Asia-Pacific region. These efforts have only been upheld by “the ASEAN Way,” a set of norms and principles that reflect diplomatic efforts as it concentrates on consensus-building and consulting with member states to boost confidence. This approach has been embraced while discussing issues in relation to the South China Sea disputes.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Kelly Pang, “The Maritime Silk Road,” *China Highlights*, n.d., <https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/maritime-silk-road.htm>

<sup>89</sup> “Stirring up the South China Sea,” *International Crisis Group*, April 23, 2012, <https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/223-stirring-up-the-south-china-sea-i.pdf>

<sup>90</sup> Michail Ploumis, “Exclusive Economic Zones in the South China Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea: A Comparative Study on a Strategic Issue,” *International Journal of Science and Research*, June, 2020, <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v9i6/SR20603130651.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> “ASEAN,” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, n.d., <https://www.nbr.org/publication/asean/>

<sup>92</sup> Leticia Simões, “The Role of ASEAN in the South China Sea Disputes,” *E-International Relations*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/06/23/the-role-of-asean-in-the-south-china-sea-disputes/>

Despite extensive communication efforts from ASEAN, however, the organization's efforts have been considered ineffective; described as an "inward-looking institution," the regional organization lacks the legal authority and administrative competence to ensure conformity with regionally approved norms and standards.<sup>93</sup> While it has been useful in attempts to ease internal tensions, the ARF faces many problems when solving border disputes and lacks power in its relationship with China.<sup>94</sup>

### PCA Involvement

The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) is an intergovernmental organization that has been granted observer status by the United Nations. It provides arbitral tribunal services to address disputes arising from international agreements between member governments, international organizations, and private parties. The cases address a variety of legal problems concerning territorial and marine boundaries, including disputes located in the South China Sea. For example, in 2013, the PCA served as a deliberative forum for arbitration proceedings initiated by the Philippines under provisions instilled under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). As a result, the South China Sea Arbitration (also known as *Philippines v. China*) was issued. The contents of the arbitration concluded that China's "nine-dash-line" policy was inconsistent with the UNCLOS rights that had been previously established. It also ruled that several islands and reefs claimed by China do not give rise to an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or continental shelf, further discrediting China's territorial claim.<sup>95</sup>

However, five years following the ruling made by the PCA, China continues to strengthen its dominance over the South China Sea through reinforcing their strategic operations and maritime control.<sup>96</sup> The lack of tangible action revealed the limitations of international systems and called into question the role of ASEAN and the PCA in mediating conflicts between China and other claimant countries. As a result, countries in the region lack a clear-cut strategy to deter aggressive Chinese activity in the South China Sea while protecting their own interests.<sup>97</sup>

### UNSC Involvement

In previous years, both permanent and non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) have considered addressing the South China Sea disputes—along with PCA's ruling—in a UNSC discussion. Both former U.S. President Barack Obama and former British Prime Minister David Cameron expressed their respect for the PCA's findings and publicly condemned China's aggression in the South China Sea.<sup>98</sup> Although the South China Sea disputes have never been a central area of discussion in the UNSC, China's

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> "The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)," *Permanent Court of Arbitration*, n.d., <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/7/>

<sup>96</sup> Pankaj Jha, "Five years of PCA Ruling and Tensions in South China Sea," *Modern Diplomacy*, July 11, 2021, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/07/11/five-years-of-pca-ruling-and-tensions-in-south-china-sea/>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Greg Raymond, "The South China Sea: Next Stop the UN Security Council?," *Lowy Institute*, May 30, 2016, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/south-china-sea-next-stop-un-security-council>

territorial claims in the region have been addressed during debates related to maritime security, demonstrating that the UNSC has failed to serve as a suitable platform for China's territorial claims to be discussed.<sup>99</sup>

## Current Situation

### Overlapping Territorial Claims

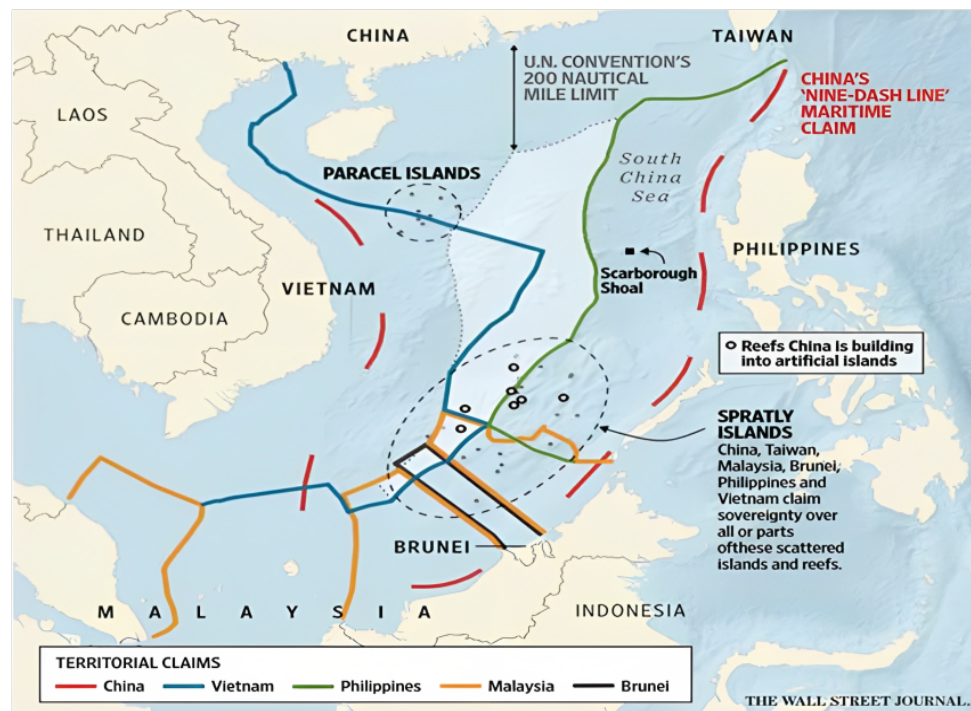


Figure 1: A map of territorial claims in the South China Sea.<sup>100</sup>

Multiple sovereignty claims have been made by various countries resulting in overlapping territories in the South China Sea; specifically, the territory covered under China's "nine-dash line" policy overlaps significantly with territorial claims made by Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Brunei. A key area of interest in the South China Sea (portrayed in the figure above) is the Spratly Islands, an archipelago composed of more than 100 reefs. The Spratly Islands play a vital role in many critical sectors including national security, energy security, and national pride.<sup>101</sup> Specifically, numerous commerce ships transport commodities, people, and energy supplies to Asian-Pacific countries near the Spratly Islands. The country which controls the islands would be able to secure

<sup>99</sup> Edith M. Lederer, "US and China clash at UN over South China Sea disputes," *AP News*, August 9, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-china-united-nations-persian-gulf-tensions-south-china-sea-e8cb4473dd23dc867bad79a0590f10b8>

<sup>100</sup> "Maritime Boundary Disputes in the South China Sea International Legal Issues," *International Institute for Law of the Sea Studies*, February 20, 2021, <http://iilss.net/maritime-boundary-disputes-in-the-south-china-sea-international-legal-issues/>

<sup>101</sup> Diana M. Ngo, "The Spratly Islands Dispute: Why is this Important?," *Energy in Asia*, October 13, 2011, <http://energyinasiablog.com/2011/10/the-spratly-islands-dispute-defining-sea-lane-security/>



the safe transportation of its commodities.<sup>102</sup> These islands are also highly desired for the potential sources of natural gas and oil. According to the Energy Information Administration, assessments from 2013 estimated a total of approximately 11 billion barrels of oil reserves and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves in the South China Sea, with around 2.5 billion barrels of oil and 25.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves located in the Spratly Islands territory alone.<sup>103, 104</sup> These claims, however, lack sufficient proof and historical evidence to make a case for sovereignty over the region.<sup>105</sup>

## Resource Exploitation

The South China Sea is a region of great economic potential, particularly for the surrounding nations in terms of energy markets. The Spratly Islands, situated in the heart of this contested area, hold significant oil and gas reserves that could prove immensely beneficial for countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the South China Sea boasts abundant marine resources, encompassing approximately one-third of the world's marine biodiversity and contributing to around 10% of the global catch.<sup>107</sup> However, studies conducted by the Filipino Department of Environment and Natural Resources indicate that 40% of fish stocks have already been overexploited, and 70% of coral reefs have been severely degraded.<sup>108</sup>

As neighbouring nations increasingly express their interest in exploiting the South China Sea's resources, including oil, natural gas, and metals, there is a growing likelihood of environmental consequences. The ecosystems within the South China Sea have already suffered from the effects of military activities and commercial endeavours. The extraction of oil and gas in this region could further endanger these fragile ecosystems.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the surge in shipping activities, coupled with the potential for oil and gas spills, heightens the risk of environmental contamination. Addressing environmental concerns and fostering responsible resource extraction practices is integral to achieving a balanced approach to maritime security in the South China Sea.

## The Interests of Non-Claimant States

Key states that have not made territorial claims in the sea but nonetheless are both politically and economically involved in the South China Sea include Australia, India, Japan, the United States, and the European Union. Non-claimant stakeholders have a strong interest in the geopolitical affairs of the region due to their dependence

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> "South China Sea," U.S. *Energy Information Administration*, February 7, 2013, [https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/regions\\_of\\_interest/South\\_China\\_Sea/south\\_china\\_sea.pdf](https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/regions_of_interest/South_China_Sea/south_china_sea.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Aaron S. Wood, "Historically Mine: The (Potentially) Legal Basis for China's Sovereignty Claims to Land in the South China Sea," *Air University*, March 8, 2021, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2528218/historically-mine-the-potentially-legal-basis-for-chinas-sovereignty-claims-to/>

<sup>106</sup> "Resources and Tensions in the South China Sea," *Offshore Technology*, May 1, 2016, <https://www.offshore-technology.com/features/featureresources-and-tensions-in-the-south-china-sea-4707224/>

<sup>107</sup> Xander Vagg, "Resources in the South China Sea," *American Security Project*, December 4, 2012, <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/resources-in-the-south-china-sea/>

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ryan McNamara, "The Environmental Collateral Damage of the South China Sea Conflict," *New Security Beat*, October 13, 2020, <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2020/10/environmental-collateral-damage-south-china-sea-conflict/>

on the South China Sea's trade and shipping routes. With more than USD 5 trillion in seaborne goods transported through the region each year, establishing safe trade practices and routes in the region is crucial for the economies of non-claimant states.<sup>110</sup> Non-claimant states are also concerned with their rights of passage and maintaining security throughout the South China Sea. Multiple extra-regional states have increased their presence in the sea through a variety of different measures. For instance, Japan has strengthened their maritime capabilities with Vietnam, similar to the Philippines' collaboration with both France and Italy to strengthen its military.<sup>111</sup> Other non-claimant states weigh their interests based on previously established alliances or economic relations.

### Case Study: The Philippines

The Philippines, an archipelago located in southeastern Asia between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, continues to experience tense confrontations with China in the South China Sea. In the arbitration case, *Philippines v. China*, the Philippines argued that China's "nine-dotted line" claim was unlawful because it breached UNCLOS accords concerning exclusive economic zones and territorial seas.<sup>112</sup> Although the case was ruled in favour of the Philippines, China refused to abide by the ruling, and instead, in 2016, President Xi Jinping declared that the ruling would not affect China's "territorial sovereignty and marine rights."<sup>113</sup> Since the decision was made, China has continued to act aggressively toward the Philippines; for instance, in April of 2023, a Chinese coast guard ship prevented a Philippine patrol vessel from sailing onto a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, causing an alarming near-collision.<sup>114</sup> This recent confrontation exemplifies the hostile nature of China and illustrates the need for proper measures to be reinforced to ensure that all claimant states respect territorial claims in the region.

### Case Study: The United States

The United States has had a long history of maritime involvement in the South China Sea. During the Obama administration, the United States repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to its Asian allies through diplomatic visits and deepening relations with Asian powers such as India and Indonesia. The United States also signed ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, which established universal ideals of peaceful coexistence and cordial collaboration among Southeast Asian countries.<sup>115</sup> The United States' relations with countries—such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam—in the region continued to improve as a result of this commitment to ASEAN.<sup>116</sup> On the other hand, the United States' relationship with China has proven to be

---

<sup>110</sup> Tiffany Ma and Michael Wills, "The Interests of Non-claimant States in the South China Sea Disputes," *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, January 20, 2016, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/raising-the-stakes-the-interests-of-non-claimant-states-in-the-south-china-sea-disputes/>

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Sreenivasa Rao Pemmaraju, "The South China Sea Arbitration (The Philippines v. China): Assessment of the Award on Jurisdiction and Admissibility," *Chinese Journal of International Law*, June 20, 2016, <https://academic.oup.com/chinesejil/article/15/2/265/2548386>

<sup>113</sup> Jim Gomez, "Tense face-off: Philippines confronts China over Sea Claims," *AP News*, April 29, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/philippines-dispute-south-china-sea-patrol-27ee9778f7302938c5090644e3d153c2>

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Bronson Percival, "U.S. Perspectives on the South China Sea," *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep05903.9.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

much more complicated, with escalating tensions and rivalries emerging in the region. The United States is interested in protecting its right of access in the South China Sea, which includes maintaining free passage and upholding its own economic interests. As a result, despite increasing tensions with China, the United States continues to conduct military exercises in the South China Sea involving ships, ground forces, and aircraft.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, several times a year, the United States sends ships past reinforced Chinese outposts in the Spratly Islands, eliciting concerns from Beijing.<sup>118</sup>

## Possible Solutions and Controversies

In order to address the issue of maritime security in the South China Sea, delegates must ensure that all decisions and potential solutions are within the mandate of the committee. Delegates are also encouraged to conduct additional research regarding what solutions have been discussed or passed, and assess them based on efficiency and effectiveness. Addressing the external factors of maritime security in the South China Sea—such as global trade, preserving marine resources, and constructing artificial islands—should be considered when formulating solutions.

### Diplomatic Negotiations Regarding Territorial Claims

While there have been attempts to address territorial claims in the past, China has been unresponsive to many of these policies.

ASEAN countries may address China's "nine-dash line" policy and utilize international pressure to convince China to reevaluate its territorial claim. The international community would explicitly reject the nine-dash line, and may consider presenting a more reasonable division of territory in the South China Sea. Non-claimant countries should consider reaffirming the importance of respecting exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of claimant states with the support of the international community. Additionally, creating a framework for conflict resolution would prevent escalation in the region. The negotiations might involve creating a dispute resolution mechanism, such as an international tribunal or arbitration body, to handle disputes that cannot be resolved through direct negotiations.

### Forming Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

With increasing military build-up and overlapping sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, resolving disputes is crucial to prevent overlapping territorial claims from escalating into regional conflicts. Solutions that may be taken into consideration would require support from the ASEAN countries, China, and the rest of the international community. Similar efforts, however, have been taken in the past and have proven to be unsuccessful; although China has expressed its commitment to the Declaration of the Code of Conduct as a signatory, it continues to act aggressively in overlapping territories such as the Spratly and Paracel Islands.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> "US Holds Drills in South China Sea Amid Tensions with China," *AP News*, February 12, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/politics-united-states-government-south-china-sea-beijing-084fbd1d64120859467b7f9157c4a797>

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Vikram Nehru, "A New Approach to Problem-solving in the South China Sea," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, August 18, 2014, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/08/18/new-approach-to-problem-solving-in-south-china-sea-pub-56411>

In order to strengthen China's commitment to cooperating with other countries to form conflict resolution methods, a coherent framework and multilateral defence arrangements must be implemented. This process may involve utilizing existing platforms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) or the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). Simultaneously, countries may benefit from discussing the military presence and activity of non-claimant states in the region—particularly the United States. There have been multiple intense encounters in the South China Sea that have almost resulted in military faceoffs. To prevent military conflict in the future, the role of non-claimant states' military personnel in the South China Sea may be a popular topic of discussion.

### **The Enhancement of Economic Cooperation**

Due to the importance that the South China Sea plays in global economic trade, extensive measures should be taken in order to maintain economic cooperation despite escalated tensions. This may involve conversations regarding the protection of economic trade routes during times of conflict, as well as creating agreements that outline principles for the protection of other shared economic interests in the South China Sea.

Discussions regarding the topic of economic cooperation will also involve topics such as claimant states' fishery rights, as there have been multiple instances of confrontations between fishers and the military. For example, after a confrontation between the Chinese coast guard and local fishers from the Philippines regarding a rich fishing ground in disputed waters, the issue of fishing rights in the South China Sea has escalated into a concerning issue. This issue is particularly important for local communities in the Philippines as approximately 627,000 fishermen in the Philippines have been affected by the aggressive nature of the Chinese coast guard in the South China Sea.<sup>120</sup> In order to prevent disputes from emerging over economic conflicts, territories that will result in the distribution of resources should be considered in future economic discussions. As a result, some possible solutions include the implementation of a joint resource management program to oversee and regulate fishing activities in disputed areas. This program should involve scientific research to determine sustainable fishing quotas, ensuring the long-term viability of fish stocks. Additionally, to combat the impacts felt by the fishermen communities in the Philippines, free-trade agreements should be reinforced to protect their fishing rights. This may involve creating special and differential treatment provisions for less developed countries with communities that rely on these resources.

### **Environmental Protection Policies**

As maritime security measures intensify in the South China Sea, there are adverse consequences for the region's environment and diverse ecosystems. In the South China Sea in particular, overfishing, drilling activities, military exercises, and the construction of artificial islands on reefs can bring devastation to one of the world's most resource-rich marine areas.<sup>121</sup>

There are multiple ways to combat the environmental impacts of enhancing maritime security. One potential solution would be to introduce marine protected areas (MPAs) in the region. MPAs are widely accepted by

---

<sup>120</sup> Jojo Riñoza and Jason Gutierrez, "Filipino Fishermen Feel Effects from Beijing's Expansionism in South China Sea," *Benar News*, May 28, 2021, <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/in-focus/filipino-fishermen/index.html>

<sup>121</sup> Pratinashree Basu, "In Deep Water: Current Threats to the Marine Ecology of the South China Sea," *Observer Research Foundation*, March 8, 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/in-deep-water-current-threats-to-the-marine-ecology-of-the-south-china-sea/>

claimant states in disputed territories and have led to success in protecting ecosystems within the Arctic Circle, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean basin.<sup>122</sup> With stakes in the disputed South China Sea rising, these ocean sanctuaries can ensure economic growth, inculcate environmental sustainability, and maintain the oceans. Other potential solutions include oil spill response cooperation, placing limitations on military personnel in the region, and reevaluating the impacts of building military bases or artificial islands. Protecting the South China Sea limits military personnel in the region, and reevaluating the impacts of military bases and artificial islands directly addresses the potential triggers for conflict. It promotes a more peaceful and cooperative approach to maritime security, reducing the chances of unintended confrontations.

## Bloc Positions

### Southeast Asian Coastal States

Southeast Asian coastal states consist of the member states of the ASEAN union, which includes countries such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. These countries are most eager to address Chinese aggression in the South China Sea and discuss overlapping territorial claims. ASEAN has been paramount in promoting dialogue and cooperation in the region, working with the international community to address challenges and conflicts. This bloc will be most interested in preserving its own economic interests in the region and preventing conflicts from arising with China, a militarily superior country. Due to ASEAN's conflicting stances and relations with China, each nation will have differing opinions on a greater military presence from the United States. Countries such as Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, are likely to have a nuanced stance on the issue of a greater U.S. military presence in the South China Sea. While they may appreciate international support to deter Chinese aggression and maintain regional stability, they also want to avoid escalating tensions and provoking conflict in the area. On the other hand, enhanced trade cooperation with China would likely be contingent on several factors, including respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as non-coercive trade practices.

### China and its Allies

This bloc position consists of China and its economic and political allies. Some of its allies include Cambodia and Laos, both of which are ASEAN member states but have shown support towards China's territorial policies.<sup>123</sup> Historically, China's territorial claims have also been supported by several African countries, including Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Mozambique.<sup>124</sup> This bloc's primary focus is to assert China's claims of sovereignty in the South China Sea, and firmly support China's "nine-dash line" policy. While countries allied with China will advocate for China's territorial claims, they will also have to collaborate with other countries to develop dispute resolution mechanisms and strengthen economic cooperation for their own self-

---

<sup>122</sup> James Borton, "Ocean Sanctuaries to Shape Geopolitics in S China Sea," *Asia Times*, June 6, 2023, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/06/ocean-sanctuaries-to-shape-geopolitics-in-s-china-sea/>

<sup>123</sup> Edgar Pang, "'Same-Same but Different': Laos and Cambodia's Political Embrace of China," *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute*, September 5, 2017, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2017\\_66.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ISEAS_Perspective_2017_66.pdf)

<sup>124</sup> Alfredo C. Robles, Jr., "China's South China Sea Diplomacy Could Use Some Lessons from Africa," *The Diplomat*, June 29, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/chinas-south-china-sea-diplomacy-could-use-some-lessons-from-africa/>

interests. Collaborative efforts may include trade agreements that further their economic agendas while also supporting China's territorial claims.

### **Extra-Regional States Concerned with Freedom of Navigation**

This bloc consists of non-claimant states who have a vested interest in ensuring freedom of navigation. Countries in the European Union, the United States, Australia, and Japan would emphasize adherence to international law, including the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). These nations would denounce China's aggression in the South China Sea and advocate for the equitable resolution of territorial disputes. The bloc may encourage the development and implementation of a Code of Conduct (COC)—a set of rules and guidelines to govern behaviour that are agreed upon—in the South China Sea. The COC would be aimed at preventing clashes and managing disputes peacefully. Additionally, they would work to safeguard the freedom of navigation for all nations and ensure secure, international access. This would include conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea, as the United States has done so previously. Furthermore, the bloc will express its commitment to upholding open sea lanes and maintaining essential communication routes for global trade by creating agreements or frameworks with China that prevent any disruption to international trade routes in the South China Sea.

### **Middle Eastern Countries Concerned with Regional Stability**

Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Lebanon and Yemen are not directly involved in the South China Sea disputes. However, they are interested in maintaining regional peace and stability for their own economic interests and energy supplies. While international relations may not remain rigid over time, these countries have previously expressed their support towards China in terms of resolving territorial disputes through negotiations rather than a unilateral decision.<sup>125</sup> These countries are primarily concerned with allowing for the freedom of navigation in international waters and maintaining a peaceful environment to facilitate trade and energy security. As a result, they may support possible solutions related to trade agreements or frameworks as well as economic and energy cooperation.

---

<sup>125</sup> “Arab States Praiseworthy for Stance on South China Sea Issue - Chinese Envoy,” *Global Times*, May 14, 2016, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/983028.shtml>

## Discussion Questions

1. What are the historical, legal, and geopolitical factors that have contributed to the overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea?
2. How can the committee strike a balance between respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of coastal states while also upholding international law?
3. How can an equal balance between mitigating environmental impacts and upholding economic interests be achieved?
4. How might non-claimant states contribute to fostering peace and stability in the South China Sea?
5. Why do claimant states in the South China Sea continue to violate territorial claims? How can these territorial claims be negotiated to prevent this from happening in the future?
6. Does the presence of military assets and infrastructure in the South China Sea do more good or harm towards reducing conflict escalation?
7. How can the concept of “freedom of navigation” be balanced with the rights and interests of coastal states in the region?
8. How can global economic trade be maintained in the region during times of conflict?

## Additional Resources

The South China Sea: Explaining the Dispute:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/15/world/asia/south-china-sea-dispute-arbitration-explained.html>

A New Approach to Problem-solving in the South China Sea:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/08/18/new-approach-to-problem-solving-in-south-china-sea-pub-56411>

The Philippines' Dilemma: How to Manage Tensions in the South China Sea:

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/north-east-asia/china/316-philippines-dilemma-how-manage-tensions-south-china-sea>

What is the South China Sea Dispute?:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>

## Bibliography

- "Arab States Praiseworthy for Stance on South China Sea Issue - Chinese Envoy." *Global Times*. Last modified May 14, 2016. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/983028.shtml>.
- "ASEAN." *The National Bureau of Asian Research*. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/asean/>.
- Basu, Pratinashree. "In Deep Water: Current Threats to the Marine Ecology of the South China Sea." *Observer Research Foundation*. Last modified March 8, 2021. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/in-deep-water-current-threats-to-the-marine-ecology-of-the-south-china-sea/>.
- Borton, James. "Ocean Sanctuaries to Shape Geopolitics in S China Sea." *Asia Times*. Last modified June 6, 2023. <https://asiatimes.com/2023/06/ocean-sanctuaries-to-shape-geopolitics-in-s-china-sea/>.
- "China Sea Territorial Disputes to be Handled by International Maritime Judicial Center Created by Beijing." *Manila Livewire*. Last modified March 14, 2016. [https://www.manilalivewire.com/files/r-created-by-beijing\\_u0r8jzq8p0c6fhse5muga0/](https://www.manilalivewire.com/files/r-created-by-beijing_u0r8jzq8p0c6fhse5muga0/).
- "China's Maritime Disputes." *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/chinas-maritime-disputes>.
- Cordesman, Anthony H., and Arleigh A. Burke. "The Critical Role of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea." *China and the U.S.: Cooperation, Competition and/or Conflict An Experimental Assessment*, 336-43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep22586.30>.
- "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea," *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*. Last modified May 14, 2012. <https://asean.org/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2/>.
- Deng, Shawn, and Lau, Chris. "Philippines accuses Chinese vessels of 'dangerous maneuvers' in disputed South China Sea," *CNN News*, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/09/asia/philippines-south-china-sea-dangerous-maneuvers-intl-hnk/index.html>
- Erbas, Yunus. "The Conflict in the South China Sea: A Focus on a Possible Solution." *Beyond the Horizon*. Last modified April 11, 2022. <https://behorizon.org/the-conflict-in-the-south-china-sea-a-focus-on-a-possible-solution/>.
- Gomez, Jim. "Tense face-off: Philippines confronts China over Sea Claims." *AP News*. Last modified April 23, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/philippines-dispute-south-china-sea-patrol-27ee9778f7302938c5090644e3d153c2>.
- Jha, Pankaj. "Five years of PCA Ruling and Tensions in South China Sea." *Modern Diplomacy*. Last modified July 11, 2021. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/07/11/five-years-of-pca-ruling-and-tensions-in-south-china-sea/>.
- Landler, Mark. "Offering to Aid Talks, U.S. Challenges China on Disputed Islands." *New York Times*. Last modified July 23, 2010. <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/24/world/asia/24diplo.html>.
- Latiff, Rozanna. "Chinese Ship Leaves Malaysian Waters after Month-Long South China Sea Standoff." *Reuters*. Last modified May 15, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/china-security-malaysia-idINKBN22R1QT>.



- Lederer, Edith M. "US and China clash at UN over South China Sea disputes." *AP News*. Last modified August 9, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/europe-china-united-nations-persian-gulf-tensions-south-china-sea-e8cb4473dd23dc867bad79a0590f10b8>.
- Liang, Annabelle. "Southeast Asian Navies to Hold 1st Joint Drills with China." *AP News*. Last modified October 19, 2018. <https://apnews.com/article/eeb3463f4a1244f9b61ac914abecedde>.
- Ma, Tiffany, and Michael Wills. "The Interests of Non-claimant States in the South China Sea Disputes." *The National Bureau of Asian Research*. Last modified January 20, 2016. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/raising-the-stakes-the-interests-of-non-claimant-states-in-the-south-china-sea-disputes/>.
- "Maritime Boundary Disputes in the South China Sea International Legal Issues." *International Institute for Law of the Sea Studies*. Last modified February 20, 2021. <http://iilss.net/maritime-boundary-disputes-in-the-south-china-sea-international-legal-issues/>.
- McNamara, Ryan. "The Environmental Collateral Damage of the South China Sea Conflict." *New Security Beat*. Last modified October 13, 2020. <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2020/10/environmental-collateral-damage-south-china-sea-conflict/>.
- Nehru, Vikram. "A New Approach to Problem-solving in the South China Sea." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Last modified August 18, 2014. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2014/08/18/new-approach-to-problem-solving-in-south-china-sea-pub-56411>.
- Ngo, Diana M. "The Spratly Islands Dispute: Why is this Important?" *Energy in Asia*. Last modified October 13, 2011. <http://energyinasiablog.com/2011/10/the-spratly-islands-dispute-defining-sea-lane-security/>.
- Pang, Edgar. "'Same-Same but Different': Laos and Cambodia's Political Embrace of China." *ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute*. Last modified September 5, 2017. [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2017\\_66.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ISEAS_Perspective_2017_66.pdf).
- Pang, Kelly. "The Maritime Silk Road." *China Highlights*. <https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/maritime-silk-road.htm>.
- Pemmaraju, Sreenivasa Rao. "The South China Sea Arbitration (The Philippines V. China): Assessment of the Award on Jurisdiction and Admissibility." *Chinese Journal of International Law*, June 20, 2016, jmw019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/chinesejil/jmw019>.
- Percival, Bronson. "U.S. Perspectives on the South China Sea." *Navigating the Indo-Pacific Arc*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep05903.9.pdf>.
- Perlez, Jane. "Vietnam Law on Contested Islands Draws China's Ire." *New York Times*. Last modified June 21, 2012. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/world/asia/china-criticizes-vietnam-in-dispute-over-islands.html>.
- Ploumis, Michail. "Exclusive Economic Zones in the South China Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean Sea: A Comparative Study on a Strategic Issue." *International Journal of Science and Research*, June 2020. <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v9i6/SR20603130651.pdf>.
- "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: 'The Spirit of the Quad.'" *The White House*. Last modified March 12, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.

- Raymond, Greg. "The South China Sea: Next Stop the UN Security Council?" *Lowy Institute*. Last modified May 30, 2016. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/south-china-sea-next-stop-un-security-council>.
- "Resources and Tensions in the South China Sea." *Offshore Technology*. Last modified May 1, 2016. <https://www.offshore-technology.com/features/featureresources-and-tensions-in-the-south-china-sea-4707224/>.
- Riñoza, Jojo, and Jason Gutierrez. "Filipino Fishermen Feel Effects from Beijing's Expansionism in South China Sea." *Benar News*. Last modified May 28, 2021. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/in-focus/filipino-fishermen/index.html>.
- Robles, Alfredo C., Jr. "China's South China Sea Diplomacy Could Use Some Lessons from Africa." *The Diplomat*. Last modified June 29, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/chinas-south-china-sea-diplomacy-could-use-some-lessons-from-africa/>.
- Simões, Leticia. "The Role of ASEAN in the South China Sea Disputes." *E-International Relations*. Last modified June 23, 2022. <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/06/23/the-role-of-asean-in-the-south-china-sea-disputes/>.
- "South China Sea." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*. Last modified February 7, 2013. [https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/regions\\_of\\_interest/South\\_China\\_Sea/south\\_china\\_sea.pdf](https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/regions_of_interest/South_China_Sea/south_china_sea.pdf).
- "The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)." *Permanent Court of Arbitration*. <https://pca-cpa.org/en/cases/7/>.
- "South China Sea Disputes Arise Again." *National University of Singapore*. <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/publication/south-china-sea-disputes-arise-again/>.
- "Stirring up the South China Sea." *International Crisis Group*. Last modified April 23, 2012. <https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/223-stirring-up-the-south-china-sea-i.pdf>.
- "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea." *International Maritime Organization*. <https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/legal/pages/unitednationsconventiononthelawofthesea.aspx>.
- "US Holds Drills in South China Sea Amid Tensions with China." *AP News*. Last modified February 12, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/politics-united-states-government-south-china-sea-beijing-084fbd1d64120859467b7f9157c4a797>.
- Vagg, Xander. "Resources in the South China Sea." *American Security Project*. Last modified December 4, 2012. <https://www.americansecurityproject.org/resources-in-the-south-china-sea/>.
- "Vietnam Says China Still Ramming Boats, Airs Sinking Video." *Bloomberg News*. Last modified June 5, 2014. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-06-05/vietnam-says-china-still-harassing-boats-shows-video-of-sinking#xj4y7vzkg>.
- Watson, Ivan, Brad Lendon, and Ben Westcott. "The Battle for the South China Sea." *CNN*. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/08/asia/south-china-sea/>.
- "What is the South China Sea Dispute?" *BBC News*. Last modified July 7, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>.

"Why are Tensions Running High in the South China Sea Dispute?" *South China Morning Post*. Last modified February 16, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2186449/explained-south-china-sea-dispute>.

*Wilson Center*. Last modified May 14, 2019. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-china-sea-strategic-terms>.

Wood, Aaron S. "Historically Mine: The (Potentially) Legal Basis for China's Sovereignty Claims to Land in the South China Sea." *Air University*. Last modified March 8, 2021. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2528218/historically-mine-the-potentially-legal-basis-for-chinas-sovereignty-claims-to/>.

